

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
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INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
USINT BAGHDAD
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
DIA WASHDC
SECDEF WASHDC
USIA WASHDC
USCINCEUR

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PFOR PINT SY
SUBJ: SYRIAN MEDIA SUMMARY FOR MAY 17, 1977

1. MEDIA GENERALLY LED
WITH RETURN OF KHADDAM FROM TOUR OF
GULF STATES WHERE HE DELIVERED MESSAGES FROM AL-ASSAD TO
THEIR CHIEFS OF STATE ABOUT AL-ASSAD'S TALKS WITH PRESIDENT
CARTER IN GENEVA. PRESS PUBLISHED KHADDAM'S ARRIVAL STATEMENT
IN ABU DHABI IN WHICH HE INDICATED THAT ARAB MILITARY
PREPAREDNESS WENT ALONG WITH POLITICAL ACTION. HE EXPRESSED
HOPE THAT GENEVA CONFERENCE WOULD BE CONVENED STTN.

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2. LEBANON. PRESS REPORTED END OF "SEARCH OPERATIONS" IN
NORTH LEBANON NEAR VILLAGE OF BILLA WHERE ADF HUNTING THOSE
WHO MURDERED TWO SYRIAN TROOPS. ADF COMMUNIQUE REPORTED
THAT OPERATION HAD RESULTED IN DETENTION NUMBER OF PEOPLE
AND CONFISCATION OF ARMS AND AMMUNITION FROM THE VILLAGE.
SAME ARTICLE REPORTED DEADLINE HAD PASSED FOR OFFICERS TO
RESIGN FROM LEBANESE ARMY IN ACTION INTENDED "TO DISMISS

OFFICERS WHO PARTICIPATED IN THE WAR WITHOUT PROVOKING HOSTILE REACTIONS FROM VARIOUS PARTIES." 163 OUT OF 880 OFFICERS SAID TO HAVE SUBMITTED THEIR RESIGNATIONS. ARTICLE REPORTED THAT STUDY UNDERWAY TO REORGANIZE ARMY WITH VIEW TO INCREASING IT FROM 14 TO 50 THOUSAND TROOPS DIVIDED BETWEEN REGULARS AND VOLUNTEERS. PRESS FURTHER PUBLISHED STATEMENTS OF LEBANESE MININT SALMAN WHO VOICED HOPE LEBANESE INTERNAL SECURITY FORCES COULD GRADUALLY REPLACE ADF. HE STATED CAIRO AGREEMENT HAD BEEN IMPLEMENTED IN MANY PARTS, WITH FULL IMPLEMENTATION STILL PENDING.

3. EDITORIAL IN AL-BAATH CALLED FOR REEMERGENCE OF LEBANESE ARMY TO ASSUME CONTROL OF SOUTH LEBANON "IN FACE OF ZIONIST INTERVENTIONS." IT ALSO DECLARED THAT LEBANON'S PRESIDENT "ENTITLED TO REJECT ANY TREND TOWARDS PARTITION GIVEN THE WILL OF THE LEBANESE PEOPLE." COLUMN SAW ATTEMPTS AT PARTITION AS MEANS OF FRAGMENTING ARAB WORLD. COMMENT: RECENT EDITORIALS ON LEBANON EVIDENCE GROWING SYRIAN CONCERN WITH ATTEMPTS OF PARTITION LEBANON WHETHER DE FACTO OR OUTRIGHT.

4. AL-ASSAD-CARTER MEETINGS. TISHRIIN CARRIED SPECIAL REPORT FROM UN IN NEW YORK CLAIMING THAT MEETINGS WERE REGARDED AS AMONG MOST IMPORTANT TO TAKE PLACE ON ME. UN SOURCES CLAIMED AL-ASSAD ACTING FROM STRENGTH BECAUSE OF HIS BALANCED RELATIONS WITH GENEVA CO-CHAIRMEN. ATMOSPHERE OF PESSIMISM PREVAILING BEFORE ENCOUNTER SAID TO BE SUPPLANTED BY ONE OF "RESTRAINED COOPERATION." UN CIRCLES CLAIMED THAT EXTENSION OF UNDOF LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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MANDATE WOULD BE TEST OF THEIR MEETING'S SUCCESS. MEANWHILE, ARAB SOURCES AT UN SAID THAT RECENT US ASSURANCES GIVEN TO ISRAEL MEANT TO PREVENT ESTREMISTS FROM WINNING THE ISRAELI ELECTIONS.

COMMENT: ARTICLE APPEARS INTENDED TO REASSURE ANY DOUBTERS THAT AL-ASSAD-CARTER MEETINGS WERE SUCCESS DESPITE RECENT US ASSURANCES GIVEN ISRAEL. IF RENEWAL OF UNDOF MANDATE TEST OF MEETING'S SUCCESS, THEN THEY SHOULD PASS WITH FLYING

COLORS.

5. PALESTINIAN-RAKAH CONTACTS. IN EDITORIAL OSTENSIBLY AIMED AT ISRAELI POLITICIANS, WHO ALL SAID TO BE HARDLINERS, AL-BAATH EDITOR ADNAM BAGAJATI LASHED OUT AT PLT-RAKAH CONTACTS. HE CLAIMED THAT RAKAH NOT TRULY LEFTIST AS ALLEGED SINCE IT ACKNOWLEDGES ZIONISM AS THE IDEOLOGY OF THE JEWISH STATE AND OCCUPATION OF ARAB TERRITORY (SIC). HE ARGUED THAT THE PLO IN ITS QUEST TO GAIN RECOGNITION

BY ISRAELI GROUPS SHOULD NOT MAKE CONCESSIONS OR BREAK
RANKS WITH ITS FELLOW ARABS. FINALLY, HE ASSERTED THAT
PALESTINIAN ENERGIES SHOULD BE EXPENDED IN
UNIFYING THE MOVEMENT, ESPECIALLY SINCE ISRAELI LEFTISTS
WILL HAVE NO IMPACT ON OUTCOME OF THE ELECTIONS.
MURPHY

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